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E.O. 12356: N/A
 SUBJECT: CODEL MONTGOMERY DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE

USIA FOR AR, P/G, P/PFL, VOA/BRL
 DEPT FOR ARA/CEN, H, ARA/P, S/LPD
 USIA OP CENTER HOLD FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 24

REF: MANAGUA 1940

1. CODEL MONTGOMERY, CONSISTING OF DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVES G.V. MONTGOMERY (MS), KENNETH GRAY (IL), GEORGE DARDEN (GA), AND SANDER LEVIN (MI), HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT SANDINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT JUST BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE FROM MANAGUA AT 0730 MARCH 23. SOME 30 MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WERE PRESENT, INCLUDING U.S., NICARAGUAN AND THIRD-COUNTRY CORRESPONDENTS. THE CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN ENGLISH ONLY, HOWEVER, AND ONLY U.S. JOURNALISTS POSED QUESTIONS. EMBASSY TRANSLATOR PROVIDED SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION FOR SEVERAL NICARAGUAN JOURNALISTS.

2. ALL FOUR CONGRESSMEN INDICATED THEY WOULD HAVE VOTED IN THE SAME WAY ON THE CONTRA AID PROPOSAL DEFEATED IN THE HOUSE MARCH 20 (MONTGOMERY AND DARDEN VOTED AYE; GRAY AND LEVIN VOTED NO), BUT ALL FOUR EXPRESSED DEEP RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT, AND INDICATED THEY WERE MAINTAINING AN OPEN MIND TOWARD COMPROMISE PROPOSALS ON THE AID ISSUE.

3. IN MANAGUA REFTEL, PARAGRAPH 9, PLEASE CORRECT DATE OF APRIL 18 TO APRIL 15.

4. TEXT OF MARCH 23 PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWS:

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5. MONTGOMERY: WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO IS EACH MEMBER MAKE A BRIEF COMMENT AND THEN WE'LL BE OPEN TO ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE. THIS HAS BEEN A VERY BENEFICIAL TRIP FOR ME AND THE REST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION. WE HAVE MET WITH NINE DIFFERENT GROUPS SINCE WE HAVE BEEN HERE. I MIGHT ADD THAT WE'VE SEEN A LOT OF COURAGEOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE TALKED TO US. SOME OF THEM SUPPORTED CONTRA AID, SOME DID NOT, AND SOME WOULD NOT EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS ON CONTRA AID. WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM BEING HERE ON THE GROUND IN NICARAGUA CONVINCES ME THAT I MADE THE RIGHT VOTE ON CONTRA AID AND WOULD VOTE LIKE THAT AGAIN IF WE DO HAVE ANOTHER VOTE IN CONGRESS. ALSO, I AM CONVINCED THAT IF CONTRA AID IS PASSED IN THE CONGRESS, WE WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE U.S. ADVISORS AND TRAINERS TO WORK WITH THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN THE USE OF THIS MILITARY EQUIPMENT. IT WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS MISTAKE ON OUR PART NOT TO FURNISH THESE ADVISORS. I'D LIKE TO CALL ON KEN GRAY OF ILLINOIS.

6. GRAY: THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN. GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. THIS HAS BEEN A WHIRLWIND TRIP AND WE HAVE GAINED MUCH KNOWLEDGE. AS ONE WHO VOTED AGAINST THE CONTRA AID, I FEEL THAT MY POSITION WAS RIGHT, BECAUSE I THINK TIME IS ON OUR SIDE. THE ECONOMY IS GOING DOWNHILL. I THINK THIS PLACE IS GOING TO FALL OF ITS OWN WEIGHT ECONOMICALLY. THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SAYING IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING THERE'S GOING TO BE ANOTHER CUBA--THIS IS ALREADY ANOTHER CUBA. WE SAW SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS; WE SAW CERTAINLY NOT FREEDOM OF RELIGION, AND I THINK WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT THE CONTADORA PROCESS IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR THIS COUNTRY AND FOR THE UNITED STATES AND IN FACT FOR THE WORLD. IT'S SORT OF LIKE A TEETER-TOTTER: EVERY TIME WE PULL UP, THE SOVIET UNION'S GOING TO BALANCE THAT OUT, AND I THINK TO AVOID AN OUTRIGHT CONFRONTATION, THAT THE CONGRESS OUGHT TO HAVE A STRONG WILL, AS OUR DISTINGUISHED CHAIRMAN POINTS OUT, BY SAYING WE'RE GOING TO PROVIDE AID TO THESE PEOPLE IF THE CONTADORA PROCESS DOESN'T WORK. BUT I'M AN ETERNAL OPTIMIST. I BELIEVE THAT THE CONTADORA PROCESS IS GOING TO WORK IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. THANK YOU.

7. MONTGOMERY: I'D LIKE TO CALL ON SANDY LEVIN OF UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 06 MANAGUA 01946

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MICHIGAN.

8. LEVIN: AS YOU KNOW, I VOTED AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL. BEING HERE, I HAVEN'T CHANGED MY MIND, BUT I LEAVE HERE MORE CONCERNED THAN EVER, AND LET ME JUST EXPRESS THESE CONCERNS: FIRST OF ALL, IT'S EVEN MORE COMPLICATED WHEN SEEN HERE THAN FROM WASHINGTON. SECONDLY, IT'S CLEAR TO ME THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT. THERE'S LESS AND LESS TIME THAN I THOUGHT. THIRDLY, I FIND IT MORE INTRACTABLE THAN I THOUGHT. WE REALLY FOUND NOTHING IN THE MIDDLE. AS I SEE IT, EVERYTHING IN THIS COUNTRY IS ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE. I AM FOR NEGOTIATIONS NOW, EVEN THOUGH I'M SKEPTICAL THAT THEY'LL WORK. I THINK THIS IS THE TIME FOR PRESSURE AND PRUDENCE, NOT FOR HYPE OR HYSTERIA. I LEAVE HERE SOBERED. THE WAY OUT IS DIFFICULT. THERE'S NO QUESTION IN MY MIND ABOUT THE VIOLATIONS OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS HERE, OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION. THIS IS NOT A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY. WHATEVER PLURALISM THERE IS, THEY'RE HEADED IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, I FEAR. BUT THAT MAKES IT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAT WE TRY THE PATH OF NEGOTIATIONS EVEN THOUGH, AS I SAY, I'M SKEPTICAL, BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION, THAT THEY'LL WORK. BUT I THINK AT THIS POINT

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IT'S THE WAY WE SHOULD GO.

9. MONTGOMERY: BUDDY DARDEN OF GEORGIA.

10. DARDEN: GOOD MORNING. I'M BUDDY DARDEN OF GEORGIA. I WAS HERE EARLIER, IN DECEMBER OF 1984, AND WHAT DISTURBS ME MOST IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE MILITARY BUILDUP HERE BY THE SANDINISTAS, AS WELL AS THE OVERALL DETERIORATION THAT WE'VE SEEN OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OF FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY. IN GENERAL, IT SEEMS THAT THERE'S A GROWING POLARIZATION HERE IN NICARAGUA WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS. AS I SAID BEFORE, MY REAL CONCERN IN THIS AREA IS THE DESTABILIZATION BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE TREMENDOUS BUILDUP HERE BY THE SANDINISTAS. I POINTED THIS OUT TO THE VICE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY. HE MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AMERICAN INVASION, AND I TOLD HIM ONCE MORE THAT CONGRESSMAN MONTGOMERY AND I SPENT ABOUT AN HOUR WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN THIS WEEK, AND PRESIDENT REAGAN ASSURED US THERE WOULD BE NO AMERICAN TROOPS SENT INTO NICARAGUA, NOR WOULD THERE BE ANY TYPE OF INVASION. IF THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO INVADE NICARAGUA, IT WOULD HAVE DONE SO A LONG TIME AGO, AND WOULD DO SO REGARDLESS OF THE MILITARY BUILDUP THAT THE SANDINISTAS HAVE ATTEMPTED. SO I BELIEVE THAT THE MILITARY BUILDUP DOWN HERE IS DESTABILIZING, AND I THINK IT PRESENTS A THREAT TO OUR STABILITY AND TO OUR FRIENDS IN HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR AND COSTA RICA AND SURROUNDING AREAS. SO THIS TO ME IS A REAL DANGER, WHICH I BELIEVE WARRANTS SOME TYPE OF CONTINUED UNITED STATES AID TO THE CONTRAS, AND AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THIS AID WILL CONTINUE. MR. CHAIRMAN.

11. MONTGOMERY: THANK YOU. WHY DON'T WE OPEN IT UP TO QUESTIONS.

12. QUESTION (AP): MR. DARDEN, WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES YOU SAY THERE IS A BUILDUP? WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN SINCE FRIDAY NIGHT THAT MAKES YOU BELIEVE THERE IS A BUILDUP HERE?

13. DARDEN: WELL, A NUMBER OF THINGS. NOW THERE ARE SOMETHING LIKE 250 TANKS AS COMPARED TO SIX WHEN SOMOZA WAS HERE.

14. QUESTION: BUT WHO CONFIRMED THAT? DID YOU SEE THESE TANKS?

15. DARDEN: THIS WAS CONFIRMED BY A NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WE TALKED WITH AT THE EMBASSY, SOME SOURCES ON THE RECORD, SOME NOT ON THE RECORD, BUT IT'S RELIABLE INFORMATION. IT'S PART OF THE CONTINUOUS BUILDUP OF THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS NOT NEEDED TO SUPPRESS ANY TYPE OF REBELLION HERE. THIS IS THE TYPE OF BUILDUP, I THINK, UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 06 MANAGUA 01946

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WHICH HAS AGGRESSIVE OVERTONES, GIVING THE GOVERNMENT THE ABILITY TO EXPORT ITS REVOLUTION INTO SURROUNDING COUNTRIES.

16. QUESTION (UPI): WHEN THE REPUBLICAN DELEGATION WAS HERE LAST WEEK, THEY WENT BACK TO WASHINGTON AND SAID THAT VICE PRESIDENT RAMIREZ HAD SIMPLY LIED TO THEM ABOUT A MILITARY BUILDUP, SPECIFICALLY, AND ABOUT OTHER THINGS. HOW DID YOUR CONVERSATION GO WITH RAMIREZ?

17. MONTGOMERY: HE WAS RATHER LOW-KEY WITH US. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WE THOUGHT THAT HE SAID DIDN'T MAKE SENSE WITH THE INFORMATION THAT WE HAD...

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18. QUESTION: WHAT THINGS?

19. MONTGOMERY: SOME OF THE AREAS THAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT IN THE EMBASSY THAT HE SAID THAT JUST DIDN'T CHECK OUT. THEY WERE NOT CORRECT. BUT OTHER THAN THAT, I THOUGHT HE WAS VERY LOW-KEY AND CONCILIATORY.

20. QUESTION: CAN YOU GIVE US EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT DIDN'T CHECKOUT?

21. MONTGOMERY: I'D RATHER NOT AT THIS TIME.

22. LEVIN: LET ME JUST ADD THAT WHILE THE FOUR OF US VOTED IN DIFFERENT WAYS, AND WE DO DISAGREE, I THINK EACH OF US HAD DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. I DID ASK HIM POINT-BLANK IF THERE WERE CUBAN ADVISORS HERE. HE SAID YES, THERE'S 700. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT THERE ARE MORE. BUT I THINK THE QUESTION IS, THERE ARE THESE DEEP DEEP DISAGREEMENTS, IS THERE ANY CHANCE TO NEGOTIATE THEM OUT, AVOIDING THE CATASTROPHE. AS I SAID, I THINK THIS SITUATION IS ON THE EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE; TIME IS RUNNING OUT. OUR DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT CARRIED ON IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HOSTILITY, I THINK ONE CAN SAY, OF HYSTERIA. I DON'T THINK THAT MEANS NEGOTIATIONS WILL SUCCEED, BUT I THINK IT IS USEFUL FOR US TO EXCHANGE VIEWS, INCLUDING OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT. AND ALL OF US HAVE DEEP DIFFERENCES WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT.

23. QUESTION: SIR, THE NEXT TIME THAT YOU VOTE, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO VOTE?

24. LEVIN: WELL, THERE ARE GOING TO BE ALTERNATIVES-- FIVE, SIX, SEVEN ALTERNATIVES. THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE, BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO VOTE AGAIN.

25. QUESTION (ABC RADIO): BUT CONGRESSMAN, THE BASIC LINE IS THAT THE CONTRAS SAY THEY WANT TO OVERTHROW THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT. ARE YOU FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT?

26. LEVIN: I'M NOT, BUT I THINK THERE ARE MANY ALTERNATIVES THAT RUN SHORT OF THAT, AND WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT, AND PERHAPS HELP SHAPE, A NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVES, NOT JUST A SINGLE COMPROMISE. THE CHAIRMAN SPOKE WITH LEE HAMILTON BEFORE HE LEFT, AND MR. HAMILTON IS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION TO CONTRA AID. HE'S GOING TO BE WORKING ON AN ALTERNATIVE. THERE ARE OTHERS THAT ARE WORKING ON IT, AND MR. DARDEN AND THE CHAIRMAN ARE WORKING.

27. MONTGOMERY: TO FOLLOW UP ON WHAT SANDY SAID, I THINK WE WILL ALL LOOK AT ALTERNATIVES. I BELIEVE THE FOUR OF US ARE IN AGREEMENT. I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE TO NEGOTIATE, BECAUSE I DON'T THINK IT WILL WORK, BUT I'M WILLING TO TAKE A LOOK AT IT, AND MAYBE GIVE IT A CHANCE, IF THAT'S WHAT WOULD COME BEFORE THE CONGRESS, TO HAVE A DELAY, THEN I THINK ALL FOUR OF US CERTAINLY WOULD CONSIDER THAT.

28. QUESTION: CONGRESSMAN, THE SANDINISTAS CLAIM THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS NEVER SERIOUSLY NEGOTIATED, AND IN FACT WHEN THE MANZANILLO TALKS WERE GOING ON, IT WAS THE UNCLAS SECTION 04 OF 06 MANAGUA 01946

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UNITED STATES THAT BROKE UP THE TALKS.

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29. MONTGOMERY: THAT'S A MATTER OF OPINION. THE ADMINISTRATION, THIS EMBASSY HERE, PEOPLE WE MET WITH HERE, THE NICARAGUANS, SOME OF THEM WE MET, SAID THAT THE SANDINISTAS HAVE NEVER NEGOTIATED PROPERLY, AND IT COULD BE PROBLEMS ON BOTH SIDES.

30. QUESTION (CBS): CONGRESSMAN LEVIN, MEMBERS OF BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE HAVE SAID THAT AT SOME POINT THERE WILL BE MORE MONEY FOR THE CONTRAS IN WHATEVER FORM OR AMOUNT. DID VICE PRESIDENT RAMIREZ OR ANY OTHER SANDINISTA OFFICIAL YOU MET WITH SAY WHAT THEIR RESPONSE WOULD BE IF MORE MONEY WERE TO BE GIVEN TO THE CONTRAS?

31. LEVIN: NO, BUT THE IMPLICATION IS THAT ESCALATION WOULD LEAD TO ESCALATION, AND THAT'S ONE CONCERN THAT I HAVE. AND THAT'S WHY I FEEL THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT, THAT THE CRISIS IS, IF ANYTHING, EVEN DEEPER THAN I THOUGHT. I MUST SAY, I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO BE IN LATIN AMERICA A NUMBER OF TIMES, INCLUDING WHEN I WAS AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FOREIGN AID AGENCY IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, AND I DO HOPE THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES FULLY REALIZE THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT. THE CLOCK IS CLOSE TO NOON OR MIDNIGHT, HOWEVER YOU WANT TO LOOK AT IT, AND IF THERE ARE GOING TO BE SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS, UNDER THEIR AUSPICES OR WITH THEIR PARTICIPATION, THEY BETTER GET IN. THE TIME FOR LIP SERVICE FOR NEGOTIATIONS, IN MY JUDGEMENT, HAS RUN OUT.

32. QUESTION (REUTERS): WHEN YOU SAY TIME IS RUNNING OUT, ARE WE TALKING ABOUT U.S. TROOPS HERE, OR WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

33. LEVIN: NO, NO, I DON'T MEAN U.S. TROOPS. I SENSE THAT ESCALATION IS LIKELY IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER FROM ONE SOURCE OR ANOTHER, UNLESS THIS TIME PERIOD IS USED EFFECTIVELY TO SIT DOWN AND TALK SERIOUSLY. I THINK THE ODDS AGAINST SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS ARE LONG, BUT IN MY JUDGMENT, THEY SHOULD BE TRIED. WHEN I SAY TIME IS RUNNING OUT, I DON'T MEAN THAT IN A THREATENING WAY, IT'S JUST A BASIC FACT. IT'S ONE THING TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON; IT'S ANOTHER THING IN A CROWDED SCHEDULE TO HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK TO PEOPLE HERE. AND WE TALKED TO A VARIETY OF PEOPLE.

34. DARDEN: SANDY, COULD I POINT OUT ALSO, THAT WE AREN'T NEGOTIATORS, WE AREN'T DIPLOMATS. WE'RE NOT DOWN HERE TRYING TO FORGE OUR OWN SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. I THINK QUITE FRANKLY, ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS WE'VE HAD TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN THE ESCALATION OF THE RHETORIC--BY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, BY THE SANDINISTAS-- AND WE'VE GOT TO BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL WHAT WE SAY DOWN HERE AND WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE STATES, BECAUSE THE ESCALATION OF THE RHETORIC I CONSIDER TO BE ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS WE ARE FACING TODAY.

35. LEVIN: I AGREE.

36. MONTGOMERY: LET ME JUST FOLLOW UP ON A POINT THAT YOU MADE, THAT I MADE EARLIER, THAT TALKING ABOUT MILITARY ADVISORS AND TRAINERS, TO COME IN HERE WITH THIS CONTRA AID AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT, THAT DOESN'T MEAN PUTTING AMERICAN TROOPS ON THE GROUND FIGHTING IN NICARAGUA, BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE SHAMEFUL TO GIVE THIS EQUIPMENT TO THESE CONTRAS OR FREEDOM FIGHTERS, AND THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO OPERATE IT. AND THEN I KNOW YOU SAY, WELL, THAT STARTS ANOTHER VIETNAM ERA PROCESS. I DON'T BUY THAT. I THINK WE'VE LEARNED SOMETHING FROM VIETNAM, AND TRAINERS AND ADVISORS HAVE WORKED IN EL SALVADOR, BY PUTTING A LIMITED NUMBER ON THE NUMBER OF TRAINERS AND ADVISORS WHO

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COULD COME IN. WHY DON'T WE TAKE ONE MORE QUESTION, AND WE'LL CALL IT QUILTS.

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37. QUESTION (MIAMI HERALD): CONGRESSMAN LEVIN, I HAVE A TWO-PART QUESTION. ONE, DID YOU GET A CLEAR IDEA FROM YOUR CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRESIDENT RAMIREZ OR ANYONE ELSE YOU TALKED TO HERE OF WHAT MIGHT BE NEGOTIABLE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SANDINISTAS, GIVEN THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS SAID THAT ESSENTIALLY HIS AIM IS TO ELIMINATE SANDINISTA CONTROL OF THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT? SECOND, DID YOU PERCEIVE ANY STRONG ENDORSEMENT ON THE PART OF THE SANDINISTAS' POLITICAL OPPONENTS FOR AID TO THE CONTRAS?

38. LEVIN: FIRST OF ALL, I THINK IT'S VERY UNCLEAR HOW NEGOTIATIONS WOULD GO. THAT'S HOW CLOSE TO INTRACTABLE THE SITUATION IS. THE GULF IS VERY VERY DEEP. AS I SAID, I DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING IN THE MIDDLE, AND THAT MAKES IT VERY VERY DIFFICULT. THE PEOPLE WE TALKED TO ON ALL SIDES, MANY OF THEM EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR CONTRA AID. WE TALKED TO PEOPLE YESTERDAY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHO ARE BITTERLY OPPOSED TO CONTRA AID. I DON'T AGREE WITH THE CHAIRMAN'S POSITION ON THE PROPOSAL FOR ADVISORS. BUT LET ME JUST SAY THAT WE ALL DEEPLY FEEL, AS I THINK CONGRESSMAN DARDEN HAS PUT SO ELOQUENTLY, THAT THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR HYSTERICAL COMMENTS FROM ANYBODY, BUT IS REALLY A TIME FOR PRUDENCE. I THINK THERE HAS TO BE PRESSURE, BUT THERE HAS TO BE PRUDENCE BECAUSE THE OPENING FOR AVOIDING CATACLYSM IN THIS AREA, I THINK THAT TIME IS RELATIVELY BRIEF.

39. DARDEN: SANDY, COULD I POINT OUT TOO THAT THE REAL DIFFERENCE I SEE BETWEEN NOW AND DECEMBER OF 1984, IS THAT THAT MIDDLE GROUND HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED, AND IT DOES SEEM TO BE ESCALATING FROM ONE SIDE TO ANOTHER. EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE EITHER IN FAVOR OF TOTAL NON-INVOLVEMENT OR ELSE COMING IN WITH STRONG AID TO THE CONTRAS, SO THIS IS WHAT DISTRESSES ME, IS THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE, FROM THE OPPOSITION AND ALSO FROM THE GOVERNMENT, A TOTAL LACK OF MIDDLE GROUND. IT SEEMS TO BE DETERIORATING QUITE A BIT, IF NOT DISAPPEARING.

40. QUESTION (NBC): WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER A GOOD-FAITH EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO NEGOTIATE. I KNOW THAT ONE OF THE COMPROMISE PROPOSALS CALLS FOR SOME KIND OF A CERTIFICATION THAT THERE ARE GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATIONS. I KNOW THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS AS A CONDITION THAT THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD TALK TO THE CONTRAS. THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT HAS SAID IT WILL NEVER TALK TO THE CONTRAS. ANY COMMENT?

41. LEVIN: IT SHOWS HOW INTRACTABLE....I LEAVE HERE CONVINCED THAT THERE ISN'T ANY ALTERNATIVE RIGHT NOW THAT I'D VOTE FOR. IF WE WERE SURE WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO TWO OR THREE WEEKS FROM NOW, I DON'T THINK WE WOULD HAVE COME. WE DIDN'T COME HERE, ANY OF US, TO ELICIT OR PUT TOGETHER DEBATING POINTS. THE CHAIRMAN LED THIS DELEGATION BECAUSE OF THE BELIEF THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS, I WOULD SAY GRAVE, SITUATION, AND THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS NEED TO FACT-FIND AND GET A FEEL FOR THEMSELVES WHAT'S GOING ON. I THINK THERE WILL BE MANY ALTERNATIVES. AT THIS POINT I WOULDN'T PREDICT WHAT BARGAINING IN GOOD FAITH MIGHT MEAN. I WOULD HOPE THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WOULD TAKE THE LEAD, WORKING ON A BIPARTISAN BASIS, A TRULY BIPARTISAN

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BASIS, SEEING IF THERE IS SOME COMMON GROUND IN THE CONGRESS THAT MIGHT IN THE END FIND A PIECE, JUST A PIECE, OF COMMON GROUND HERE.

42. MONTGOMERY: LET ME WRAP IT UP BY SAYING THAT WE WILL TAKE OUR FINDINGS BACK, ALL OPINIONS OF THE FOUR MEMBERS HERE, AND PASS THEM ON TO THE ADMINISTRATION, TO THE UNCLAS SECTION 06 OF 06 MANAGUA 01946

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STATE DEPARTMENT AND TO OUR COLLEAGUES AND THEY CAN DIGEST IT. BUT IT'S BEEN VERY HELPFUL, AND....

43. QUESTION: MR. CHAIRMAN, COULD YOU GIVE US A LIST OF WHOM YOU ENDED UP MEETING WITH?

44. MONTGOMERY: WE CAN'T DO THAT, BUT YOU CAN PROBABLY GET THAT FROM THE EMBASSY.

45. LEVIN: SUSAN WOULD BE GLAD TO READ IT, BECAUSE IT CHANGED.... I JUST WANT TO ADD IF I MIGHT, THE EMBASSY WAS VERY COOPERATIVE IN SETTING UP MEETINGS FOR WHOMEVER WE WANTED TO SEE, ON ALL SIDES OF THIS ISSUE. AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO STAY, SUSAN AND MIKE WILL JUST RUN THROUGH THE SCHEDULE NOW. WE'D BE GLAD FOR YOU TO HAVE COPIES.

46. MONTGOMERY: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

47. REPRESENTATIVE LEVIN SPOKE WITH SEVERAL REPORTERS ON THE RECORD FOLLOWING THE FORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE. FOLLOWING IS A PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF HIS REMARKS:

48. LEVIN:SAID DURING THE DEBATE, WE PROBABLY OVERESTIMATE WHAT MILITARY FORCE WOULD DO AND UNDERESTIMATE WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT BRING. I THINK THERE'S NO SIMPLE ANSWER. THIS IS EXTREMELY COMPLICATED. I DON'T KNOW YET WHAT ALTERNATIVE MIGHT WORK. BUT I FEEL THIS DEEPLY AS I LEAVE HERE, THAT THE SITUATION IS SO SERIOUS THAT EVERY ALTERNATIVE HAS TO BE LOOKED AT, AND THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR HYPERBOLE OR FOR THEORY. THE QUESTION IS, IS THERE A HARD-NOSED ANSWER TO THIS VERY VERY SERIOUS SITUATION, AND I DON'T KNOW THAT THERE IS.

49. QUESTION (UPI): DON'T ALL THE ALTERNATIVES CURRENTLY PROPOSED INCLUDE SOME KIND OF MILITARY AID TO THE CONTRAS EVENTUALLY?

50. LEVIN: WELL, I THINK THERE'S A WIDE VARIETY, FROM FENCING IN MILITARY AID TO A PERIOD OF 90 DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND REPORTING BACK TO THE CONGRESS.

51. QUESTION (UPI RADIO): YES, BUT IT ENDS UP WITH MILITARY AID, RIGHT?

52. LEVIN: NO, IT COULD BE REPORTED BACK TO THE CONGRESS WITHOUT ANY FURTHER CONDITIONS. SO THERE ARE A VARIETY OF ALTERNATIVES. SO IN A WORD I THINK THE SITUATION HERE IS RIGID, BUT THE ALTERNATIVES HAVE SOME FLUIDITY, AND I'M NOT SURE WHICH ALTERNATIVE MIGHT MAKE SENSE, SINCE WE HAVE TO PUT OUR MINDS TO SEE IF THERE'S SOMETHING, IF THERE MIGHT BE COMMON GROUND WITHIN THE CONGRESS. I THINK THE FEELINGS ABOUT THE SANDINISTA GOVERNMENT ARE DEEP, INCLUDING MINE. IT IS TUMBLING TOWARD A UNITARY STATE. IF THERE'S SOME PLURALISM HERE, THIS ISN'T A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY THAT I RECOGNIZE. BUT I HAVE TO FEEL THERE IS A SLIGHT BIT OF HOPE, AND WE NEED TO PURSUE THAT HOPE. CLYDE

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END OF MESSAGE

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